(a) whether a 16th century castle in Kargil, a 17th century monastery in Ladakh, a historic civic centre in Shimla and a palace in UP figure in the list of 93 endangered heritage sites across 47 countries compiled by World Monument Fund;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether these monuments are in Government's list for heritage monuments; and

(d) if so, how the Government propose to protect and preserve these sites?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (c) The World Monument Fund (WMF) is private trust based at New York (USA). It has no connection with UNESCO. It funds conservation, restoration and development of monuments worldwide. In its publication "2010 World Monument Watch", it has indicated that the following 4 sites in India are at risk out of 93 such sites identified by the Fund across 47 countries:

(i) Chiktan catsle, Kargil (Laddakh)

(ii) Dechen Namgyal Gonpa, Nyoma (Laddakh)

(iii) Historic Civic Centre, Shimla (Himachal Pradesh)

(iv) Kothi, Qila Mahamudabad.

None of the above sites are under ASI protection.

(d) Does not arise.

Change in monsoon

1559. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ:

SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state whether there has been significant change in the pattern of the monsoon in the last decade, in any of the Meteorological divisions of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): The rainfall pattern of the monsoon, both at the country level and meteorological sub-division scale, generally shows great deal of year to year variation of the total seasonal quantum and active/weak spells (duration and frequency) of rainfall within the season. Analysis of the rainfall data for the recent 10-year period 2000-2009 does not signify any major characteristic change for any of the meteorological sub-divisions.

However, a marginal decreasing trend in monsoon rainfall over Himachal Pradesh (-3.7%) and small increasing trend over Saurashtra and Kutch (7%) and Lakshdweep (4.3%) are observed.

Visit of Australian Prime Minister

1560. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister of Australia has recently, paid a visit to India and held discussion with his counterpart and other leaders on several issues;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held with the Prime Minister of Australia with various leaders and outcome thereof;

(c) whether the Australian Prime Minister has urged Government of India to upgrade 'strategic partnership' and to expand the bilateral relationship; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government on such views of the Australian Prime Minister?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) and (b) Yes. Mr. Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia visited India from 11 to 13 November, 2009. During his visit, he met the President, the Vice President and the Prime Minister to discuss bilateral, regional, international and economic issues of mutual interest. External Affairs Minister, Minister for Human Resource Development and Minister for Commerce and Industry were present during the talks held between the two Prime Ministers. Minister of State(IC) Environment & Forests called on the Australian Prime Minister. A Joint Statement between India and Australia and a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation were issued at the conclusion of the visit.

(c) and (d) The two Prime Ministers upgraded the relationship to a strategic partnership and affirmed their desire to intensify bilateral contacts. They emphasized the need to reinvigorate bilateral parliamentary exchanges and welcomed the proposal to establish a new Young Political Leaders Exchange Propramme. The two Prime Ministers acknowledged the signing of a MOU on Cooperation in the field of Water Resources. The recent agreement on India and Australia holding an Annual Ministerial Dialogue on Education, was yet another important decision. Australian Prime Minister reiterated Australia's support for India's candidature for a permanent seat of a reformed UNSC.

Meeting with special representative of China

†1561. SHRI PRABHAT JHA:

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that just after a few hours of completion of 13th round of talks between the special representative of India and China in New Delhi to settle the border dispute between the two countries the military analyst of main think tank of China advised the Chinese Government to work on the strategy of dividing India into 20 to 30 independent countries;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government has registered its objection with the Chinese Government in this regard; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi